



WHAT IS ISLAM?

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

KHOORSHID KHANUM QASSIM ALI JAIRAZBHOY

(OF BOMBAY)

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What is Islam?

(The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings.

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God. The name ISLAM was expressly given by the Qur-án.

Yea! Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is the doer of good deeds to others, he has his reward from His Lord.
—Qur-án, 2 : 112.

This day have I perfected for you your religion, and completed My favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as your religion.
—Qur-án, 5 : 3.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

Certainly We created man in the best make—Qur-an, 95 : 4.
 God saith : “ O Man! follow My laws, and thou shalt become
 like unto Myself—Muhammad.

A Muslim is he from whose hand no harm goes to another.
 —Muhammad.

Whoso believeth in One God, and the life beyond, let him not
 injure his neighbours.—Muhammad.

THE PROPHETS OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known
 as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the
 Faith. Muslims, i.e. the followers of Islam, accept all such
 of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and
 Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of
 humanity.

Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been
 revealed to Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob, and
 the tribes, and (in) that which was given to the Prophets from
 their Lord: we do not make any distinction between any of
 them, and to Him do we submit.—Qur-an, 2. : 136.

THE QUR-AN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-an.
 Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred
 book, but, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have
 become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-an,
 the last Book of God, came as recapitulation of the former
 Gospels.

An Apostle from Allah, reciting pure pages wherein are all
 the right books—Qur-an. 98 : 2-3.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Measurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

They (the Believers) all believe in Allah, and His Angels, and His books, and His Apostles.—Qur-ān, 2 : 285.

And who makes things according to a measure, then guides them to their goal—Qur-an, 87 : 3.

Most surely He is able to return him (Man) (to life), on that day when hidden things shall be made manifest.—Qur-ān, 86 : 8.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Pre-measurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering. Islam points out the right course and

leaves man to work out his own destiny.

HAVE not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips,
and pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways.

—Qur-an, 90 : 8-10.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Invisible in Person. He is the Light of the heaven and the earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith is of itself insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright, and whosoever goes astray, to his detriment only does he go astray: nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another.
—Qur-an, 17 : 15.

He who in prayer prevents not from wrong and evil, increases in naught save remoteness from the Lord—Muhammad.

ETHICS IN ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine attributes" says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels and leading him to the border of Divinity.

Every child is born with the nature of Islam: then it is its parents which make it a Jew, or a Christian or a Magian.
—Muhammad.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Men and women come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual, and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under like obligations, the one to the other.

O people! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord: Who created you from a single being, and created its mate of the same.
—Qur-an, 4 : 1.

And they (i. e. the women) have rights similar to those against them in a just manner.—Qur-an, 2 : 228.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM. Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches, and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of

real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and white into one fraternal whole.

And people are naught but a single nation—Qur-an, 10 : 19.

O you men! Surely We have created you of a male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable among you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duties); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.—Qur-an, 49 : 13.

The Arab does not excel the non-Arab unless he is the more pious of the two.—Muhammad.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT,—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God. The Qur-án inculcates freedom of thought and does not countenance any compulsion, physical or moral, in matters religious.

There is no compulsion in religion.—Qur-án, 2 : 256.

The difference of opinion among my followers is a blessing from Allah.—Muhammad

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to the angels.

And say: O Lord! increase me in my knowledge.—Qur-án, 20 : 114.

Seek knowledge, even if it be in China.—Muhammad.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

So when you are free, strive hard—Qur-ān, 94 : 7.

God is gracious to him that earneth his living by his own labour, and not by begging:—Muhammad.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

By no means shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend (benevolently) out of what you love: and whatever thing you spend, Allah surely knows it.—Qur-an, 3 : 91.

Whoso is able and fit, yet worketh not for himself, nor for others, God is not kind to him.—Muhammad.

The tax of charity should be collected from the rich and given to the poor.—Muhammad.



(Entries below are to be filled in by the intending member of the Islamic Brotherhood.)

Surname.....*S. Muhammad*.....

Full Name.....

Date and Place of Birth.....

Present Address.....

Education.....

Profession.....

Previous Religion.....

The particular church or denomination of former Religion.....

The reasons for the change of faith.....

Any Islamic literature which you may have read.....

Any Islamic organisation which you may have come in contact with.....

The above replies are correct to the best of my knowledge

Signature

Date

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